

CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

of

WORTHMORE ACADEMY

for

Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools

WORTHMORE ACADEMY

Table of Contents

Information Sheet

Executive Summary

Table of Contents i

Full Application Narrative 1

I.	Who we are.....	1
A.	Description of Founding Group	1
B.	Community partnerships	3
II	Our Vision	3
	Mission.....	3
B.	Need	3
C.	School Characteristics	4
III.	Educational Services Provided.....	5
A.	Educational Philosophy.....	5
B.	Academic Standards	5
C.	Curriculum	6
D.	Assessment	7
E.	Support for Learning	8
F.	Special student populations	9
IV.	Organizational Viability and Effectiveness.....	9
A.	Budget	9
B.	Enrollment/Demand	10
C.	Governance and Management	10
D.	Human Resources.....	11
E.	Financial Management	15
F.	Facility.....	15
G.	Transportation	16
H.	Risk Management.....	16
I.	Timeline	16
V.	Goals	17
VI.	Summary of Strengths	17

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Supportive letters showing need for school.

Attachment 2 – School Calendar.

Attachment 3 – Lesson Plans

Attachment 4 – Assessment Information

Attachment 5 – Letters Supporting Enrollment/Demand

Attachment 6 – Amendments to Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws and IRS Tax Exempt Letter

Attachment 7 – Resumes and Authorizations for CPA's and Attorney

Attachment 8 – Organizational Chart

Attachment 9 – Employee Benefits

Attachment 10 – Main Location Lease Agreement and Floor Plan

Attachment 11 – Satellite Location Lease Agreement and Floor Plan

Attachment 12 – Commercial Insurance Policy

Assurance Form

Five-Year Budget

Full Application Narrative

I. Who we are

A. Description of Founding Group

After much reflection on the Mayor's application for charter school sponsorship, Worthmore Academy has selected a highly qualified and diversified founding team. Understanding that it is crucial to have a well-balanced team, Worthmore Academy has assembled an exceptional group of individuals designed to fulfill the conditions recommended by the Mayor's Application. The following individuals comprise the founding team of Worthmore Academy:

Diana Buser – Teacher (Curriculum Specialist) – Ms. Buser holds an undergraduate degree in Education and a graduate degree in Education with an endorsement in learning disabilities. She has more than twenty years of educational experience in both the private and public sectors. Ms. Buser's expertise includes a broad range of teaching styles. These diverse teaching methods will allow Worthmore Academy to meet the educational needs and learning styles of each individual student.

Chip Calwell – Counselor – Chip Calwell holds an undergraduate degree in Psychology and Humanities and a graduate degree in Agency Counseling and Clinical Psychology. Mr. Calwell is dyslexic and understands such students' struggles in a mainstream school. Being dyslexic enables Mr. Calwell to develop unique and supportive relationships with the children. Drawing on his life experience and educational accomplishments, Mr. Calwell develops self-esteem programs for the children at Worthmore Academy, including those with special needs and those deemed at-risk. Mr. Calwell and the staff of Worthmore Academy believe that education is more than academic instruction; it must also include social and emotional guidance.

Karen Clifton – Parent – Karen Clifton is a parent of three children ages five through twelve years. One of her children has a mild language learning disability. In seeking help for her child, Mrs. Clifton has become aware of children's/parents' school rights and now serves as an advocate for children who have special needs. Prior to becoming a full-time mom, Mrs. Clifton worked for the State of Indiana as an administrative assistant in the Finance Department. Mrs. Clifton will bring a voice for parents' educational concerns and needs to the founding team, and her experience in finance will be an asset in working with the financial plan.

Nancy Delph – Educator in Learning Disabilities, Psychologist and Social Worker – Mrs. Delph has been a teacher for children with learning disabilities, a social worker and a support specialist. Her experience as a support specialist will enable Mrs. Delph to help develop a collaborative program among parents, students and staff to meet the appropriate developmental landmarks and social skills for all children (including those with special needs and those considered at-risk).

Dr. June Fishback – Psychologist – Dr. Fishback is a psychologist with many specializations including educational consultant, applied research advisor for child and youth

studies, field study advisor and an active educational speaker, (both locally and nationally). She also works extensively with adults in educational and career counseling. Dr. Fishback brings a vast knowledge to Worthmore Academy's founding team. She will provide thorough diagnostic testing, and develop a speaker's bureau to educate the public about various educational issues. Dr. Fishback intends to continue in the field of education and wishes to be a vital member of Worthmore Academy's founding team. Dr. Fishback's most recent project is developing a tutoring program for families with English as a second language, especially in the Hispanic population.

Sandra Foster – Administrative Director and Lay Counselor – Ms. Foster has 30 years of administrative experience in law and local government. She is very active as a lay counselor and has attended numerous seminars and workshops on emotional disorders, behavioral difficulties and problem solving techniques. Ms. Foster will work closely with our CPA and legal counsel to stay in compliance with all administrative and financial standards and guidelines. Ms. Foster will also work on a one-to-one basis with students and parents to improve specific communication skills and problem solving techniques.

Rhoda Israelov – Financial Advisor – Ms. Israelov is a vice president at Salomon Smith Barney, Inc. and brings her expertise in financial planning and management to our team. Ms. Israelov has been working with Worthmore Academy as a financial planner and fund raising advisor for the past few years. Additionally, Ms. Israelov comes to our founding team with excellent experience in school development and was a key figure in the financial planning and fundraising for the Indianapolis Hebrew Academy.

Carol McCracken – Teacher (Assessment Specialist) – Mrs. McCracken holds an undergraduate degree in elementary education and a graduate degree in elementary education with both learning disabilities and mildly mentally handicapped endorsements. Mrs. McCracken's expertise is in the elementary grade levels. With more than 20 years of experience, Mrs. McCracken has acquired an unlimited knowledge of reading assessments. She will be a key specialist in assessing student placement and progress in addition to administering standardized testing. Mrs. McCracken's primary role is tracking individual progress, not just standardized progress, for special needs students and at-risk students.

Natalie Peeler – School Psychologist – Mrs. Peeler has an Ed.S. degree specializing in school psychology. Mrs. Peeler has been a teacher and a school psychologist in both public school and private school sectors. She will provide individual assessments on all enrolled students enabling Worthmore Academy to derive an accurate and appropriate educational plan for all students, gifted, special needs and at-risk.

Brenda Jackson – Director – Ms. Jackson is the founder/owner/director of Worthmore Academy. Ms. Jackson is an entrepreneur with extensive special education experience in the world of learning disabilities and has proven her leadership in the field of education by bringing a 6:1 ratio to the students in her school. In the past 14 years Worthmore Academy has been an effective educational home to 400 students. Starting out with 6 students and one teacher Worthmore Academy, under the direction of Ms. Jackson, has grown to two locations and a

student population of 65. Ms. Jackson will bring this same leadership, teaching style and positive outlook to a Charter School.

B. Community partnerships

One of the advantages of becoming a charter school sponsored by the Mayor is having the school located in Marion County. There are numerous resources allowing the teachers to supplement their lesson plans, providing for innovative educational opportunities for the students. Examples are as follows: Indianapolis Museum of Art, Eiteljorg Museum, Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis Zoo, The Children's Museum, Indiana Historical Society, various historic monuments and a wide-array of the arts, including Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, IRT, Indianapolis Opera and Civic Theater.

Worthmore Academy has been working with local businesses planning for start-up equipment and supplies. The following is a list of businesses and Community Organizations that have agreed to collaborate with Worthmore Academy in meeting the needs for equipment and supplies.

Sherwin Williams
Lowe's
New Horizons of Eagle Creek U.M.C.
1st Baptist Church of Greenwood

II. Our vision

Mission

The mission of Worthmore Academy is to provide a safe and respectful environment permitting all students, including the at-risk, to develop both socially and scholastically. Our goal is to prepare the students to reach their full academic potential allowing them to pursue higher education regardless of their learning differences.

B. Need

Because all students learn differently, Worthmore Academy fulfills an important role in the current educational environment. It has developed a program that assesses each student, determines strengths and weaknesses and then provides a one-to-one student/teacher ratio to use the child's strengths to improve areas of weakness. Worthmore Academy has researched a multitude of educational curricula and teaching methods, enabling its staff to have the resources to meet each student's individual learning styles. Worthmore Academy's philosophy on education is that it is pertinent for all children to have a strong base in reading, writing and arithmetic because this is the root to learning all other subjects. Children have a wide variety of interests in additional subject areas (e.g. science, history and foreign language) but do not have the opportunity to enjoy them because they struggle with the basic skills. Along with addressing student's individual needs it is very important to recognize that all children need a sense of success. Children have resilience, but this can be destroyed with repeated failures. Worthmore

Academy's goal is to develop a program that combines addressing a student's academic needs while fostering his/her social and emotional growth. If these needs are addressed successfully, Worthmore Academy will have provided a well-rounded individual who will be an asset to the community. Attached are letters from parents whose children have benefited from this educational approach. [See Attachment 1]

C. School characteristics

The Worthmore Academy school calendar follows that of the surrounding public schools with no less than 181 full instructional days. Worthmore Academy does not have half days. The school day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. The school day schedule is as follows:

8:25 – 8:30	School Announcements
8:30 – 9:15	Math class (one-to-one)
9:15 – 9:20	Passing time
9:20 – 10:05	Reading (two-to-one)
10:05 – 10:10	Passing time
10:10 – 10:55	Language Arts (one-to-one)
10:55 – 11:00	Passing time
11:00 – 11:45	Social Values (small groups)
11:45 – 11:50	Passing time
11:50 – 12:35	Lunch/Free time
12:35 – 1:20	Music (Mon. & Wed.)/Art (Tues. and Thurs.)/Gym (Fri.)
1:20 – 2:05	History (six-to-one)
2:05 – 2:10	Passing time
2:10 – 2:55	Science (six-to-one)
2:55 – 3:00	Passing time
3:00 – 3:30	Homeroom – Study Hall (six-to-one)

This schedule is followed by all kindergarten through 8th grade classes.

Worthmore Academy's kindergarten is a full-day program.

Worthmore Academy has developed a transitional program for our advanced eighth graders and freshmen. This program is for the students preparing to return to the traditional public school. The transitional program was developed to teach students by emphasizing organizational skills, note taking skills and study skills. The hours of the transitional program are 8:15 a.m. through 3:15 p.m. with 45 minute classes. The subjects are as follows: Literature/English, Algebra, U.S. History or World History, Biology, Music, Humanities (Art and Cooking are incorporated with Humanities as the class studies different cultures), Life Skills and Study Hall. The student/teacher ration is six-to-two.

Worthmore Academy's proposed after school program will offer a chess club and a dog-training club. Being a small school with a very wide spread in age, Worthmore Academy focuses on individual after school activities. As the school grows additional after school activities will be added. A copy of the school year calendar is attached. [See Attachment 2]

III Educational Services Provided

A. Educational philosophy

Worthmore Academy's educational philosophy is that all children can learn and learning can be fun. Worthmore Academy also has a philosophy for the parents: There is always hope. The key to educational success is recognizing that not one student learns in the same manner as another. Even if you compare ten students having the same learning difficulty, each one of them will still have individual learning needs. It is the responsibility of the educator to recognize each student's learning needs and find the teaching method that meets them. With this in mind, the small student/teacher ratio is a necessity. This ratio will allow the staff and students the flexibility to make changes as needed to provide the highest quality of teaching and the highest level of success.

Worthmore Academy's educational program is modeled after several schools in the nation; the Shedd Academy, 346 Central Avenue, P.O. Box 493, Louisville, KY, (207) 247-8007; www.sheddAcademy.org; dePaul School, 6620 Arlington Expressway, Jacksonville, FL 32211, (904) 724-0102, www.depaulSchool.com; The Springer School, 2121 Madison Road, Cincinnati, OH, (513) 871-6080.

B. Academic Standards

Worthmore Academy has set high academic standards. Because the school's goal is to address special needs students and students at-risk, it is a fact that the academic ability of a large percentage of students will be significantly behind both academically and socially. The teaching staff is highly qualified to work with children with special needs. The number one concern for Worthmore Academy students is to have each child functioning academically at his/her highest potential.

Many factors come into play when measuring a child's success. Worthmore Academy determines success on an individual basis. Though Worthmore Academy knows all students have to participate in the I-step exams, the majority of Worthmore Academy's students are not standard achievers. Therefore, other forms of assessment have been researched to demonstrate individual progress. Special needs children (learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, autistic spectrum), and children considered at-risk are not "standard", and until they have received education (designed) for their individual needs, they will not be able to pass the standardized testing. As mentioned in Worthmore Academy's educational philosophy, the goal is to prepare the student to return to a traditional school setting. As Worthmore Academy monitors individual progress, its goal is to make sure each student is striving to function on or above their chronological grade equivalent. This is defined by having the ability to function at grade level mandated by the state academic standards. The severity of the individual's learning disabilities or developmental delays will impact on the individualized rate of progress.

Worthmore Academy's objective for all students, including special needs and at-risk, is to monitor progress and determine when the student has successfully reached their potential. This

decision will include test scores along with teacher and parent input. When this team determines a student is ready to attend a more traditional classroom environment, the student will be referred for placement in an appropriate school.

When individual educational programs are designed for each student, the plan will include appropriate testing tools to assess an accurate rate of improvement. Therefore, a variety of testing tools have been researched to measure progress.

C. Curriculum

Curriculum used:

Shedd Method – In 1967 the department of Health, Education & Welfare recognized the Shedd method as the most effective teaching method for reading, writing and spelling. An alphabetic, phonetic, structural, linguistic approach to teaching reading, spelling & writing, it also incorporates a multi-sensory approach to learning.

Orton-Gillingham – This program was developed in 1937 to initially provide an alternative language teaching method for students with dyslexia. It continues to be an effective teaching method for children with learning difficulties in reading, writing and spelling.

Lindemood-Bell – This is a teaching program developed in California in the late 1980's to address comprehension and the ability to verbalize this comprehension.

Saxon-Math – Worthmore Academy has spent many years searching for an effective math program. Saxon Math has proven to be an overwhelming success. The key to Saxon's success is providing a daily continual review of all math concepts previously taught along with introducing new concepts. The program also exposes the students to concepts of money, telling time, simple geometry and very basic algebra as early as first grade.

Shirley Method – The Shirley Method is a very innovative teaching method for grammar. In a fun and enthusiastic way, the Shirley Method teaches parts of speech, sentence structure and sequential, organized writing techniques.

Earobics – Earobics is a computer program developed to remediate auditory processing, auditory discrimination and sequencing. This program provides Worthmore Academy the opportunity to address receptive language disorders and has proven to be quite effective.

Computer Lab – The computer lab program is developed to improve the student's knowledge of the computer and keyboarding skills. Today's technology demands an understanding of the computer. Computer training also aids children with special needs and English as a second language.

Communication Barriers – Worthmore Academy understands that many students have language difficulties (e.g. – receptive and expressive language problems). These communication barriers can appear in children with developmental delays and in those who are learning English

as a second language. Worthmore Academy will provide alternative methods for communicating while also utilizing a teaching method for over-coming these communication barriers, (e.g. – picture books, communication board, textbooks with simplified text and a translator). The translator will be proficient in sign language and multi-cultural language differences.

As the diversified needs of Worthmore Academy's student population are identified, the staff and parents will actively research the most current and innovative education programs and determine if any of these programs will meet the educational needs of any specific learning styles, including students that struggle with English as a second language. Worthmore's students do not easily fit into standard groupings. A student can be performing at near grade level in one area, and several levels beneath in another.

[See Attachment 3 containing lesson plans.]

D. Assessment

A student's progress will be monitored quarterly by using the Northwest Evaluation Association test, hereinafter referred to as "NWEA" testing. The results are reported on the NWEA RIT Scale, an achievement scale that enables teachers to measure a student's growth. As stated in NWEA literature, "Growth in student achievement can be tracked from fall to spring and across years. Percentile scores enable districts to compare a student's score with the performance of students in a large norming sample. Goal scores make it possible to compare individual student performance in each goal area to typical performance for that student's age."

The NWEA Computerized Adaptive Test will also be included in our battery of testing tools for monitoring progress. The beauty of the NWEA testing is that it allows the school to monitor students' improvement from year to year along a developmental curriculum scale or continuum. Also, the testing is individualized for each student. Reflecting our mission, goal and philosophy, the most crucial factor is teaching all children on an individual basis. Therefore, as we evaluate progress we want to have the testing reflect the effectiveness in the teaching methods being applied. The NWEA achievement reports show two kinds of scores, percentile scores and the RIT scale scores. The percentile scores are used to compare a student to a large group of students of similar age or grade. The RIT scale score shows a student's current achievement along the curriculum scale.

The basis of the NWEA

Measures of academic progress (MAP) help teachers, schools and districts to:

1. Monitor growth in student achievement over time
2. Monitor the progress of all students toward state and district standards
3. Place students into appropriate courses or instructional settings
4. Provide instructional focus

5. Screen students for Title I eligibility, special education services and gifted programs
6. Communicate to parents and the community.

[See Attachment 4]

In addition to the NWEA, the I-Step testing will be administered as mandated by the Indiana State education requirements. For the off years of I-step the TerraNova assessment will be administered.

E. Support for Learning

Worthmore Academy's philosophy regarding student behavior and discipline contains two key elements, respect and trustworthiness. This philosophy is applied to both the staff and the students. Worthmore Academy's behavior modification plan is based on positive reinforcement and providing opportunities for success. The behavioral program is consistent for all students enrolled regardless of any learning differences. The staff, parents and student, work together to modify the behavioral program and to address specific behavioral needs. Worthmore Academy firmly believes that a successful well-rounded education involves academics, social skills and self-esteem. All students attend a class referred to as Social Values or Life Skills on a daily basis. The students also participate once a week in a self-esteem program that is directed by the school counselor. The counselor communicates with the parents, teachers and students, about each project and the parents are active participants in each project. Because Worthmore Academy views a successful education as a partnership with the parents and students, parent meetings are scheduled to discuss the newest and most innovative teaching methods. Input from these meetings is a key factor in making decisions on adopting new curricula. The parents are also made aware that progress reports may be requested from the teachers on a daily basis, weekly basis or monthly basis. They are also encouraged to communicate anytime with the staff to express concerns or make recommendations that pertain to their child's education. Worthmore Academy's philosophy also recognizes that teachers are educators, counselors are emotional support, but parents know their child best. Therefore, a responsibility of Worthmore Academy's staff is to listen to the parents.

Worthmore Academy will take advantage of many learning programs offered by various organizations in the community. The Indiana Department of Health provides a multitude of health education programs. In addition to the health department, visits from the local fire and police departments will be arranged. Worthmore Academy plans to take advantage of the free programs to reinforce health and safety issues. Worthmore Academy will also take advantage of organizations that support various disabilities or catastrophic diseases as part of its health awareness program. Some examples of such programs include Aids awareness, Leukemia Society, Indiana School for the Blind and Crossroads Rehabilitation Center.

As Worthmore Academy addresses social values, giving to the community is a key factor. With this in mind, the students are encouraged to participate in volunteer work. Each year the children

sponsor a fund-raiser for the Leukemia Society, collect food donations for Gleaner's Food Bank and the 8th and 9th graders volunteer at shelters by serving lunch to the homeless.

F. Special student populations

Due to Worthmore Academy's excellent student/teacher ratio, including one-to-one, all students whether they are gifted, learning disabled, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autistic spectrum, mildly mentally handicapped, emotionally handicapped, English as a second language or at-risk, will have individual educational programs. These will provide the appropriate teaching style enabling the student to learn to his/her fullest potential. While the student/teacher ratio is the same for all children regardless of the specific learning needs, the budget for the programs will vary depending on the specifics of the disability. Students requiring assistive services, such as speech pathology, occupational therapy, and assistive technology will be assessed by their home school. If services are recommended Worthmore Academy will seek assistance by the specialist from the home school to provide additional services if determined to be a part of the student's educational plan. The distance from the home school to Worthmore Academy will determine where the services will be provided. Worthmore Academy does address each of these needs within its program, but some students will require a more intensive program than others. This is where the student's home school comes into play. For students that are using English as a second language, a translator will be provided until the student becomes proficient in the English language. The translator will also play an active role in teaching the English language to the student. During this transitional period, Worthmore Academy will provide alternative ways for the student to communicate (e.g. - picture board or picture wallet).

IV. Organizational Viability and Effectiveness

A. Budget

A projected budget indicating the estimated cost and revenues for Worthmore Academy's start-up through its first five years of operation has been compiled by the CPA firm of Katz Sapper & Miller. The projected revenue was based on averaging the current public funding per student enrolled in Indianapolis Public Schools, Lawrence Township, Pike Township, Washington Township, Wayne Township, Warren Township and Carmel Township. An additional \$2,000.00 per student was added for special education projecting a minimum of 25% of the student population would qualify under Article 7. Funding has been secured from an anonymous donor of \$10,000 - \$20,000 per year. Additional funds will be solicited through grants from private and federal resources available for charter schools. Parents will also play an important role in organizing and implementing annual school fund-raisers.

[See Proposed Five-Year Budget attached to the end of this document]

B. Enrollment/Demand

The number one demand among parents is providing a successful learning environment for their child. Worthmore Academy makes learning creative and fun, and uses each child's strengths to help cope with his/her weaknesses, thus providing success. Letters supporting that the school meets the specific needs of the locale are attached. **[See Attachment 5]**

Worthmore Academy will provide awareness programs as a portion of its goal to educate the community, parents and educators about the characteristics and the programs offered through the Academy that meet the needs for special education students having various learning differences. Worthmore Academy will serve as an active presenter at state, national and international conferences for a wide variety of learning disabilities, special needs students and students considered at-risk. Worthmore Academy will also present awareness programs at local libraries, for literacy organizations, and offer staff inservices in surrounding school corporations.

Although Worthmore Academy specializes in students with special needs or at-risk, all students in the state of Indiana will be welcomed. As stated previously, the very small student/teacher ratio at Worthmore Academy results in developing specific educational programs to meet the needs of each individual student. Those students that are enrolled and qualify for Section 504 or Title 511 Article 7 will be thoroughly evaluated to ensure an appropriate educational learning program.

C. Governance and Management

The Governance Board has the legal empowerment and responsibility for the best interest of Worthmore Academy.

The following are the responsibilities of the Governance Board:

- Implementing and monitoring the policies of Worthmore Academy, both administrative and personnel policies.
- Endorse and oversee Worthmore Academy's budget.
- Developing standards required for hiring Worthmore Academy school's staff.

The term of any board member is a minimum of two years and cannot exceed four years. The new members will be selected by the board and determined by a majority vote of the existing Governance Board.

The Governance Board will also develop a consulting team that will work collaboratively with the Board and staff.

The consulting team will consist of experts in the following fields:

Advertisement
Communications
Curriculum

Enrollment
Finance
Fundraising
Parent involvement
Staffing
Technology

The proposed individuals are being considered for possible board members:

Karen Clifton – Mother of three (5, 7, and 12 years) children and very active in their education. Mrs. Clifton will serve as the parent advocate on the board.

Nancy Delph – Educator in Learning Disabilities, Psychologist and social worker. Mrs. Delph's experience will enable her to ensure that the board will collaborate with the parents, students, staff and community to ensure that Worthmore Academy is meeting students' needs socially and educationally.

Chip Calwell – Child and Family Counselor – Mr. Calwell will advise the board on the social and emotional needs of the students and parents.

The Founding Group is in the process of interviewing two to three more individuals to serve on the board. The qualities the Founding Group are looking for are as follows:

- An individual who will bring a wealth of expertise in educational curriculum that will meet the needs of a diverse student population (Special Ed., gifted, emotionally handicapped and physically handicapped)
- An individual who will bring financial wisdom and guidance that will ensure all funds are maximized to meet the needs of Worthmore Academy's budget.
- An individual with Human Resource qualities, fund-raising abilities and expertise in grant writing.
- All board members must have a love for children.

See attached Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws and IRS Tax Exempt Letter. **[Attachment 6]**

See resumes and authorization forms for Irving L Fink, attorney, Christopher Cox, and Scott Schuster, CPA's are attached. **[Attachment 7]**

An organizational chart is attached. **[Attachment 8]**

D. Human Resources

Making the most of human resources is imperative for any organization. For charter schools especially, meeting this imperative presents both great challenges and opportunities. It presents challenge because charter schools must invent their own approaches to finding the right staff, organizing them effectively, supporting their performance and fostering a work culture that produces results. Charter schools also face compelling opportunities to do things differently when it comes to mobilizing and motivating staff, just as they do when it comes to teaching and learning.

The following issues will be addressed:

- 1) Organizational structure
- 2) Recruitment and selection
- 3) Supporting performance

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of a school influences how leaders carry out their jobs, as well as how the school's staff members respond to their leaders and tap into their own leadership potential.

A traditional organizational structure consists of a volunteer board of trustees overseeing a paid staff; but there are alternatives to this approach, including the teacher cooperative model.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Recruiting and selecting effective staff is one of the most important processes to ensure that the school operations support the school's purpose. The recruitment and selection process requires planning and considerable thought in answering the following questions:

- Who are we looking for?
- Where are we going to look?
- How are we going to select the best candidate?

The following process will be implemented to address these questions:

1. Write a job/role description for each staff member.
Describe the major work areas (classroom teaching, staff team work, parent relations, etc.) goals, and behavioral expectations/competencies for each role.
2. Identify required and desired qualifications and characteristics.
Work directly from the role description. A few general categories to consider include the following: subject matter knowledge, instructional and assessment practices, classroom management skills, knowledge of child development and awareness of typical issues facing the school's student body.
3. Identify potential sources of staff.
Use existing persona and professional networks heavily and build on any new relationships quickly to create new recruiting sources.
4. Promote the school.
The key to hiring the best candidates is to promote your school so that the best-matched candidates are more likely to accept positions. Be sure to share a copy of the mission and all relevant materials with all candidates, share student and parent testimonials, and give finalists tours of the school and let them observe classes.

5. Recruit.
Be sure the recruitment effort is multi-pronged, reaching out to several pools of potential candidates.
6. Determine process to screen candidates.
Education and experience cited can be checked through references. Content knowledge may be checked through testing, references and indicators of educational achievement. Competencies or behavioral characteristics may best be screened through interviews or on-the-job observation.
7. Prepare materials and organize assistance.
Compile documents (such as a resume, cover letter, references, assessments from classroom observations, etc.) Create or adopt some type of rating system that will allow us to assess and compare each candidate objectively.

SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE

Supporting staff performance is really about channeling staff time, talent and energy to support our school's mission and goals. Supporting performance involves an interrelated set of four primary activities:

A. Setting Goals and Expectations

Without clear expectations, it is difficult for staff to know where to focus their energies, how to improve, or whether they're doing a good job. When setting goals and expectations, keep in mind these points:

- Align individual and team goals with school goals
- Set goals for all relevant levels of the school
- Consider multiple goals and measures
- Make goals specific, measurable, ambitious but attainable, relevant and time-based
- Structure the process of goal-setting carefully so that teachers and staff buy into the goals they are asked to meet

B. Coaching and Developing

Clear expectations can go a long way toward helping staff succeed, but to build staff's capacity to meet goals, we need to build an effective professional development program. The guiding criterion for professional development should be in "results gained," not "days allotted." Short-term sessions are one way to help teachers build capacity to be effective, but being in a charter school should provide them with opportunities that break out of the wearisome "workshop mentality."

C. Evaluation

Staff members who are committed to their own and the school's success will be hungry for any information that helps them understand how they can keep doing better and better. A well-designed evaluation process and appropriate reward system can help us feed the natural desire of committed staff to succeed. Evaluating staff should have two major purposes: (1) to fuel ongoing changes in teaching practices and staff development and (2) to allocate rewards of various kinds. The best evaluation processes address both measures of achievements (to what extent have we met goals?) and underlying causes (why?).

D. Rewarding

Rewards must be designed carefully to reinforce the behaviors and results that reflect our school's mission, goals and work process. The key to creating successful reward systems which are valued by staff is to gather wide input, and devise a pay system that aligns with the school's broader culture and decision-making processes, communicates the system clearly and maintains consistency over time.

[See Attachment 9 for description of employee benefits.]

E. Teacher's Day

Because Worthmore Academy provides a very small classroom size of 4-6 students, the required number of staff is significantly higher than a traditional public school. For an enrollment of 50 students, Worthmore Academy would have a minimum requirement of ten full-time teachers and six additional part-time aides. A normal day of instruction for the full-time staff is as follows:

7:30 – 8:30	-	Prep-time
8:30 – 8:35	-	Announcements
8:35 – 9:25	-	Class – Reading
9:25 – 9:30	-	Passing Time
9:30 – 10:20	-	Class – Language
10:20 – 10:25	-	Passing Time
10:25 – 11:15	-	Class – Math
11:15 – 11:20	-	Passing Time
11:20 – 12:10	-	Class – Social Skills
12:10 – 12:15	-	Passing Time
12:15 – 1:05	-	Lunch Break
1:05 – 1:10	-	Passing Time
1:10 – 1:40	-	Art/Music
1:40 – 1:45	-	Passing Time
1:45 – 3:15	-	Homeroom/Science/Social Studies
3:15 – 3:30	-	Recess

The full-time staff is entirely responsible for lesson plans in all subject areas. The part-time assistants work directly with the homeroom teachers for all instructional plans pertaining to each individual student. The part-time assistants provide the one to one student/teacher ratio and are individually trained in all specialized curriculum.

E. Financial Management

The administrative director will manage the daily finances of Worthmore Academy. The QuickBooks computer program will be used to track these finances. Monthly financial reports will be presented to the school board and CPA will work collaboratively with the administrative director during the start-up year. Payroll and employee benefits will be processed through Management 2000. The CPA will conduct an annual audit and an updated annual budget to be submitted to the school board and the charter school sponsor.

Any changes made in the fiscal budget or school spending must be approved by the charter school board. Annual fundraising events will be organized and implemented by parent volunteers.

F. Facility

Worthmore Academy has identified and secured a main location and a satellite location.

Main Location: Identified as Worthmore East located at 5220 E. Fall Creek Parkway, North Drive, Indianapolis, Indiana 46220.

This facility consists of the leased educational wing of the main building and an annex building. The lease is with the Third Christian Church. The two buildings combined consist of 10 classrooms, a main office and conference room, a staff work room, a resource room and staff storage closets. The leased space includes a gymnasium area that also serves as a lunch room, a preparation room for the students' lunches, three different restroom locations and a computer lab. A small kitchen, located in the annex building is available for use in special cooking or art projects. The grounds of the building include a fully equipped playground and a very large paved area for outdoor recreation/gym.

Satellite Location: Identified as Worthmore West located at 6951 Corporate Circle, Indianapolis, Indiana 46278.

This facility is located in a Corporate Center. The actual facility, 6951 Corporation Circle, was formerly a non-denominational church that outgrew its space. This space, 14,000 square feet, is also being leased. The building consists of six classrooms, a common office/work room area, an administrative office, a conference room, a small kitchen area for the students to prepare their lunch, a lunch room/gymnasium area and a 7,000 sq. ft. open area, which will be used to build additional classrooms as enrollment increases. This renovation will be minimal, either studded dry walls or movable partitions. This expense is reflected in the budget. At this time there are two restroom facilities. Future growth may necessitate additional restroom areas. Further, this

location is being sub-let in the evenings and weekends to help meet the monthly lease expense. The sub-lessees are: New Horizons of Eagle Creek U.M.C., Heart of Indiana Women's Chorus and the Indianapolis Opera.

All buildings are ground level and handicapped accessible. All administrative and financial business is conducted at the main location (Worthmore East).

Lease Agreements and floor plans are attached. **[See Attachments 10 and 11]**

G. Transportation

Worthmore Academy enrollment draws children from all over the state of Indiana making public transportation very difficult for some. If possible, the home public school systems located within a reasonable and workable distance will provide transportation. If the location of the home school location makes it impossible for public transportation, parent carpools will be organized and reimbursement for gasoline expense would be reflected in the budget. If a student resides in an area where car-pooling is not feasible, the parent/guardian will be reimbursed for travel expenses.

H. Risk Management

See Attachment 12 for coverage. Upon the opening of the charter school, insurance amounts will be appropriately increased to the required coverage. In addition, the School Board professional liability will be added.

The following figures reflect the estimated costs for the increased coverage:

• General Liability	\$3,123,000
• School Board Legal/Professional Liability	\$5,000,000
• Umbrella (Excess Liability)	\$4,000,000
• Boiler and Machinery	Not needed/no exposure
• Property Damage	Included in the general liability estimate
• Automobile Liability	Not needed/no exposure
• Workers Compensation insurance	Handled through Management 2000

I. Timeline

Worthmore Academy is a conversion school from private to public. The timeline consists of making sure all standards mandated by the Mayor's sponsorship are met before the start of the school year 2002-2003. If Worthmore Academy is granted sponsorship, the spring semester of year 2002 will be a time to research and validate measurements of accountability, financial and academic. This time will also allow Worthmore Academy to develop a strong well- balanced board of directors that will bring experience and knowledge to the school. This time also gives the Board an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive leadership role for decision- making

regarding policies and faculty. Projects that will be delegated to individual Board members will be determined by each member's qualifications. The following are projects to be addressed prior to the first day of school, August 19, 2002 (staff) and August 21, 2002 (students):

- a student handbook spelling out school policies for attendance, dress code, school rules, lunch rules and discipline policies
- employee job descriptions (teachers and administrative staff), staff qualifications, hiring process, annual evaluation process and documentation needed for grounds of dismissal
- development of contract for mandatory parent involvement and
- selection of a leader to develop fund raising events including solicitation of donations and grants.

V. Goals

Worthmore Academy's number one goal is to have all students performing at their highest proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic. Because Worthmore Academy emphasizes students with special needs and children at-risk, the school population could be significantly below grade level. Therefore, the following are goals to be monitored: student progress toward state and district standards, growth in student achievement over time, placement of students in the appropriate instructional setting, providing instructional focus, screening students for Title I eligibility, providing special education services and gifted programs, evaluation of program effectiveness and communication to parents and the community.

VI. Summary of Strengths

Worthmore Academy's aim is to provide an innovative individualized educational environment for students whose learning differences and needs have not been adequately served by the public school system. Due to the students' low self-esteem, Worthmore's staff, teachers, and counselors work to develop personal relationships with students, providing them with a sense of being valued members of the school family. Parents are encouraged to be partners at Worthmore. Many participate actively by making curriculum suggestions, meeting with teachers when problems arise, helping out on field trips, and volunteering to provide extra supplies.

Worthmore's director, Brenda Jackson, has a unique leadership style. She has a strong vision of the school's purpose based on her many years of experience as an educator. Worthmore is her calling. Brenda empowers her staff by consulting with them and providing them with the freedom to make decisions when appropriate. She has a talent for sizing up each staff member's strengths and finding the best way to utilize them. As a result, her teachers and support staff live up to the confidence she places in them.

Worthmore serves a diverse student population in terms of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. As a private school, Worthmore has struggled to stay afloat financially while serving the many students who can't afford to pay full tuition. Despite a concerted effort to work with

families to meet tuition costs, some applicants must be turned away. Charter school status would enable Worthmore to serve such students regardless of financial status.

Worthmore Academy has a proven track record, an experienced director, an enthusiastic staff, and a waiting list of many desperate families. Attaining charter status is the next logical step for this school dedicated to making a difference in the lives of an often neglected group of children and their families.